

What is claimed is:

R 1. A granule consisting of:

(a) crystals of potassium chloride; and

(b) a thermoplastic cellulose ether.

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469 2. The granule of claim 1, wherein the potassium chloride crystals are between about 20 - 60 mesh.

R 3. The granule of claim 1, wherein the thermoplastic cellulose ether is ethylcellulose.

4. The granule of claim 3, wherein the ethylcellulose has a viscosity between approximately 10 - 30 cP.

5. An extended release tablet comprising a plurality of granules consisting of potassium chloride crystals and a thermoplastic cellulose ether.

6. The tablet of claim 5, wherein the granules are essentially free of surfactants or processing aids and agents.

7. The tablet of claim 5, wherein the potassium chloride crystals comprise approximately 75.3% by weight based on the total weight of the tablet.

8. The tablet of claim 5, wherein the thermoplastic cellulose ether is ethylcellulose.

✓ 9. The tablet of claim 8, wherein ethylcellulose comprises approximately 15.5% by weight based on the total weight of the tablet.

10. A pharmaceutical dosage unit in tablet form comprising a plurality of granules having an internal core of potassium chloride and an external coating of

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ethylcellulose, wherein the granules are essentially free of surfactants or processing aids and agents.

11. The tablet of claim 10, wherein the core of potassium chloride comprises approximately 75.3% by weight based on the total weight of said tablet.
12. The tablet of claim 10, wherein the ethylcellulose comprises approximately 15.5% by weight based on the total weight of said tablet.

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13. A process to produce ethylcellulose-coated potassium chloride granules comprising the steps of:

- tablet  
or  
granule
- i) forming a fluidized bed of potassium chloride crystals at a dew point of about 10-20° C,
  - ii) spraying the fluidized crystals with a mixture consisting of ethylcellulose, alcohol and water sufficient to coat the crystals, and
  - iii) drying the coated crystals to remove the water and alcohol to provide coated potassium chloride granules.
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14. The process according to claim 13 wherein the dew point in step i) is 15° C.
15. The process according to claim 13 wherein the coated potassium chloride granules of step iii) are essentially free of surfactants or processing aids and agents.
16. The process according to claim 13 wherein the alcohol is methyl alcohol.
17. The process according to claim 16 wherein the mixture of step ii) is about 10.3% ethylcellulose, 2.1% water and 87.6% methyl alcohol, by weight.

18. A method of manufacturing ethyleellulose-coated potassium chloride granules comprising the steps of:

- i) forming a fluidized bed of potassium chloride crystals,
- ii) spraying the fluidized crystals with a mixture consisting of ethylcellulose, alcohol, and sufficient water to control the buildup of static charge so as to enable substantially complete coating of the crystals, and
- iii) drying the coated crystals to remove the water and alcohol to provide coated potassium chloride granules.

19. The method of claim 18 wherein the coated potassium chloride granules of step iii) are essentially free of surfactants or processing aids and agents.

20. The method of claim 18 wherein the mixture of step ii) comprises 0.5 – 2% water, by weight.

21. The method of claim 18 wherein the alcohol is methyl alcohol.

22. The method of claim 21 wherein the mixture of step ii) is about 10.3% ethylcellulose, 2.1% water and 87.6% methyl alcohol, by weight.